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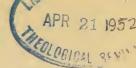












Bishop H. H. Fout, D.D.

With Introduction by Rev. W. O. Fries, D.D.



Dayton, Ohio THE OTTERBEIN PRESS 1913 TO THE DEAR MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

WHOSE LIFE OF GENTLENESS

AND

SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICE

HAS LAID ON ME A DEBT. OF GRATITUDE

THAT CAN NEVER BE REPAID

I DEDICATE

THIS LITTLE VOLUME



THIS little volume is the outgrowth of two addresses—one delivered before the Council of Evangelical Denominations at Toronto, Ontario, January 24, 1912; the other before the General Conference of the United Brethren Church at Decatur. Illinois, May 10, 1913. In response to repeated requests the work of preparing these chapters was undertaken. The task has been one of genuine pleasure. The purpose of the book is to emphasize the child's rights in the Father's family as set forth in the nine great utterances of the Master concerning childhood. These constitute the magna charta of the religious rights and privileges of the child. To exalt the child is to return to Christ, and to safeguard its unfolding life is to renew his teaching and endeavor.

—The Author



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Introduction

If Tertullian was right when he said, "Religion is natural to man," then we must recognize the religious principle as existing in the child, and begin to train him as a religious being even before he has matured sufficiently to declare his acceptance of Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. That "heaven lies about us in our infancy" is true, because every one is born into this world with a religious nature.

The religious element in a child begins to manifest itself early, and the stages of development are quite noticeable. Nanny Lee Fraser, an experienced and successful teacher of children, says: "A child in the Beginners' Department learns that God is his Father; a child in the Primary Department begins to learn that he is God's child, and the relationship is strengthened; but a boy or girl in the Junior Department begins to understand what it is to have an Elder Brother, and to go one step further in understanding that there must be definite decision for the Elder Brother."

Many persons are unwilling to accord to children credit for what they really do appreciate and understand of the gospel. Says one who has made careful observations along this line, "Experience proves that no truths are so readily understood, and no

facts so easily grasped as those that make up the content of the gospel. We may ask, Why is this? It is so because of the affinity between these truths and the simple, trustful spirit that is natural to childhood.

The worth of the child to the church and to the kingdom of God is worthy of consideration. When a child of ordinary capacity, and destitute of property is converted to God and admitted to church membership, he frequently becomes worth more to the cause of Christ than many wealthy persons who are converted in the evening, or even at the noon-tide of life.

The attendance of children upon the general services of the church is a matter of great importance. and merits all the attention it is now receiving from thoughtful and experienced leaders in Sunday-school and church work. Various methods for securing their attendance have been suggested, and some have been successfully tried out, such as the keeping of a record and giving rewards for attendance, the combined service, and the Junior Congregation, or second service designed especially for children. Why should not the children, who constitute fifty per cent. of the church's field and force, be entitled to one service of public worship every Sunday, and to at least fifty per cent, of the pastor's time? The responsibility for children attending the preaching service does not rest upon any one individual. Parents, church officers, the Sunday-school superintendent and teachers must all heartily co-operate in

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whatever plan may be adopted, and also set an example in church-going. The Sunday school must accept it as a part of its mission and work to train the child to church attendance; and only when this is accomplished will the full fruitage of effort be realized.

The purpose of this book is an admirable one—to emphasize the relation of the child to the kingdom of Christ as taught in the Word of God, and to set forth the proper attitude of the church toward the child in view of this relation. That there is some need of further enlightenment on the child's religious nature and moral standing before God, and a quickening of the conscience of some parents and teachers touching their obligations to the little ones. cannot be questioned. It is to this end that Bishop Fout, out of his heart-convictions and experience in religious work, aspires to make a helpful contribution to those who are charged with the duty of instructing and training the young. The purpose is concrete rather than dogmatic, and appeals more directly and strongly to the guardian of youth than to the theologian. The views expressed concerning the status of children in God's kingdom are thoroughly scriptural, and in accord with the general belief of the church.

The mission of this splendid book is to every home. The truths taught are exceedingly practical, and are set forth in clear and forcible language. It is a valuable contribution to the study of a vital teaching of Christianity. Its careful reading will

provoke deeper thoughtfulness and stimulate to greater effort in a realm of parental and Christian duty that means much to the individual and to the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the earth.

W. O. FRIES.



THE Christian religion is unique in the emphasis it places upon childhood. Other religions ignore or forget the child. Mohammed seems to know nothing about children. Ancient literature, except the Old Testament, is quite barren of allusions to children. In the Bible is found the only appreciation. In mythology the gods are not born as children; they come upon the stage full grown. Evidently childhood, under the Greek and Roman civilizations, was dishonored or ignored or largely subordinated; but to-day the child looms up large and splendid on the horizon of the world's attention.

The rise of interest in child life is modern. There is not a child in all Shakespeare, in Victor Hugo, in George Eliot, in all the first-class writers of the past century, except the last quarter of the century. Within this period, more than a thousand volumes have been written on child life, child psy-

chology, and child nurture. This is indeed an age of the child. It is the age of the kindergarten; it is the age of juvenile courts; it is the age of newsboy's homes and houses of reform; it is the age of legal protection for childhood; it is the age when child life is being more scientifically studied than ever before in all the history of the world; it is an age of increasing demand that courses of study in religious education should be based on sound pedagogical principles, meeting the need of the child at each stage of development. Christianity is responsible for this change.

Jesus Christ is the first great teacher, who, by word and example, was the friend and champion of childhood. In contrast with the attitude of all the other great masters of men, especially outside the Jewish commonwealth, he loved, honored, and respected childhood. He located the child at the very center of Christian influence. In answer to the question of the disciples, "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus "called to him a little child, and set

him in the midst of them." It was an object lesson more impressive than any words that might have been spoken, setting forth the present and potential value of the child, and the greatness of the child spirit. In that vision of peace when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, under the beneficent reign of love, the prophet adds, "A little child shall lead them."

God has put the child at the center, and we must not attempt to change the divine order. The world's work organizes about the child. For him the husbandman plows and sows and reaps; for him the builder builds; and for him the miner delves. A child's hand, in fact, is upon the lever of every engine; steam is his obedient slave, and electricity is his wonder-working génie. For, when you follow the circles of human activity, however wide may be their reach, you will find that, slowly but inevitably, they draw in about our common center, and at that center is the child.

The spirit of patriotism centers in the child. The patriot thinks not merely of his

country's present interests, but of its future prosperity and glory. He dreams of his children, and of his children's children, down all the coming generations. A patriotism like this should be fostered for the kingdom of God. God called Abraham his friend; but he was looking beyond Abraham to his children, through whom the divine ideals were to be realized. It is this which gives sublimity to the promises of God to Abraham. They reveal the sweep of the divine wisdom over the future.

The future of the home, church, and state is wrapped up in the child. In the light of the amazing possibilities of childhood, the picture of "the child in the midst," will be studied with increasing appreciation. It is worthy to be immortalized in highest art as heaven's estimate of child-life and its place in the kingdom of God. The disciples were dreaming of worldly honors. They were thinking of the kingdom of heaven in terms of the kingdoms of the earth. The child becomes the teacher, and they must learn the lesson that true greatness con-

sists in character rather than high position, that the spirit of the child, who thinks not of outward honor, is the condition of greatness in the kingdom of God.

It is easy to imagine the expression of combined affection and concern on the face of Jesus as he with his disciples looked upon that little child in the center of the circle. Some artist has painted a picture of Sir Walter Scott, with his little pet Marjorie wrapped up in his big south country plaid, and his arms tightly about her; on Marjorie's face is the expression of perfect trust and joy, and on the bending face of Sir Walter Scott, as he looked upon the little child, is the light of tender affection. That is a hint of how Jesus must have looked when he took the little child in his arms, and then set him in the midst of the disciples.

With the attention of the disciples fixed on "the child in the midst," Jesus would have them think with him how that all his ideals and hopes for the future of humanity are bound up in the children. The child of to-day is the potency of to-morrow. Says

Amory Bradford, "The inexhaustible Christ, the one who years afterward would be so full of God that divinity would be exhaled from him, as perfume from the flowers, or as light from the dawn, was hidden in that child in Bethlehem." The Babe of Bethlehem is a prophecy of the possibilities of every child. Every mother may sing above her cradled babe, "You may be a Christ or a Shakespeare, little child, a savior or a son to a lost world."

As the child is, so the coming age will be. Shall it help to bring in the glories seen by the prophet and seer, or shall the old world move onward unto night? Tremendous is the responsibility which rests upon those who are entrusted with child life. When the church has fully recognized the extent, value, and power of her high calling she will turn to the religious training of her youth with a common consent that here she must take her stand. Three times in a century God recreates the world through childhood. With each new generation he impanels a new jury to try the case of truth against

error, and holiness against sin. If there were no deaths or no births, we might well despair of the world; but the kingdom and the King are forever born anew in the life of the little child.

With the child as his text, Jesus made nine brief statements concerning childlikeness, and the relation of children to himself and to his kingdom. These cover the whole ground, and furnish so full a revelation of God's will as to leave no room for doubt or misconception.

I.

The first of Christ's utterances to be considered has reference to admission into the kingdom, and really involves the whole question of membership in it, "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17.) This was severe on the disciples, completely inverting their notion; rather than the children become like them, they must become like the children. The conclusion is

simply this: As childlikeness is a state necessary to entrance into the kingdom, child-hood is the surest and best time for that entrance. If Christ says that adults are to become as little children, why should we insist that little children are to become like adults before they shall be recognized as having a place in the kingdom? Moreover, it is here definitely stated that the little child represents the kingdom of heaven, and that the adult sinner must be converted and become as a little child if he shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

The deep impression made by this incident on the disciples appears in the fact that it is related by all the synoptists. The lesson revolutionized their conception of greatness, and set forth not only the way into the kingdom, but also the characteristic spirit of the new dispensation.

II.

In his second statement, the Master asserts that whoever, having entered the kingdom, would become great in it, must con-

tinue childlike. "Whoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:4.) The Master here impresses the lesson that the law of entrance, and the law of growth in the kingdom are identical. The very qualities, which fit a child for receiving the kingdom, prepare a man for progress in it.

The phrase, "humble himself," is very expressive, suggesting the thought of voluntary self-mastery, and self-subjection. The error of the disciples lay not in their desire to be great in the kingdom of heaven, but in their ideal of greatness. Aspiration is not the same as ambition; it is better, for it looks Godward, while ambition looks manward. Jesus did not rebuke the desire to be great, but told how to direct it.

Humility, which here represents childlikeness, not only leads to greatness, but is greatness. Humility, reverence, docility, frankness, faith, the unsuspecting and forgiving disposition, are the childlike qualities, and they are alike the qualities of even

the greatest men. When MacMahon returned victorious from the battle of Magenta, all Paris came out to welcome him. Many were the honors heaped upon the brave bronzed soldier. As he was passing in triumph through the streets and boulevards, a little child ran out toward him with a bunch of flowers in her hand. He stooped down and lifted her up before him, and she stood there, her arms twining about his neck, as he rode on. This simple exhibition of gentleness toward a little child pleased the people more, and seemed a more beautiful act in their eyes for the moment, than all the memory of his heroic deeds on the battlefield. Men are greatest and best, not when they are wrestling with the world, not when they are putting forth the startling qualities of power, not when they are playing the hero in great contests, but when they are exhibiting most of the spirit of a little child.

III.

After announcing that the way to greatness in the kingdom of heaven was by child-

like humility, Jesus passes from this characteristic of the child to the child himself, and says,"And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." (Matt. 18:5; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48.) Nothing could be more intensely personal or more finely dramatic. The children are recognized as the special envoys of the King of kings. Some one has well said, "There is enough in this statement, even if it stood alone, to furnish the grounds for the most elaborate and painstaking system of shepherding the most obscure and neglected children on earth." To receive the child is to receive Christ, and to receive Christ is to receive God. The child is the miniature of the divine; as a drop of dew can mirror the sun, so the child life reflects the divine life. The child is the miracle of Eden repeated, a new creation fresh from the hand of God.

To receive children in Christ's name, means to care for them as Christ would have them cared for. And the first thing is to recognize that they belong to the kingdom. The second thing is to keep them in the

kingdom. This is primarily the responsibility of the church. Even as the problem of citizenship is to keep every child true to its own land, rather than to naturalize the native born, so it is the work of the church to keep the child true to its sweet and fresh allegiance to the kingdom of the Father. Every child born into the world belongs to Christ at the beginning.

IV.

The fourth utterance of our Lord begins with a word of caution used in pointing to danger. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." (Matt. 18:10.) The mildest meaning of the word "despise" is, to undervalue; the harshest is, to pour contempt upon. The fault of the disciples then, is the fault of the church now—that of undervaluing children and child life. The making of a wrong estimate results in all manner of wrong going. The provision the church makes for the care and development of her children marks accurately the value in which the child is held. Until recently there was little room in our churches for

the children. Church architecture made no provision for them. In the children's departments of our public libraries there are training-schools for children, and neither a librarian nor an architect would dream of constructing a new building without making provision for the children. There are tombs, but no cradles in Westminster Abbey. If a church is to be a mausoleum, you may leave the cradles out, not otherwise. This no-room difficulty confronted the parents of our children's best Friend.

Instead of an attitude of indifference, Christ would have his church give the child the largest place in its thought and care. This should apply not only to the religious education of the child, but to the plan of church buildings, their equipment, and order of services. The story is told of Francis Xavier that on a certain occasion, when worn out with his many labors, he flung himself down to rest, and said to his servant: "I must sleep; if I do not I shall die. Whoever comes do not awake me; tell them I am asleep." The servant watching the door of

the missionary's tent soon saw the pale face of Xavier, and heard him say: "I made a mistake. If a little child comes, awaken me."

Of all places where the church ought never to sleep, but be awake to her duty, it is in her relationship to the child. Gladstone, England's greatest premier and statesman, once made the statement: "The relationship of the church to the youth of Great Britain is a matter of greater importance than all the combined problems of the British Em-Ex-President Roosevelt likewise pire." said: "If you are going to do anything permanent for the average man, you must begin before he is a man. The chance of success lies in working with the boy and not with the man." No greater and more vital truth has ever been announced from two continents by two of the world's greatest master-men than the identical truth in their respective statements. The problem of the child is by far the most important problem with which the church and state have to deal: because the child is the citizen and Christian of to-morrow.

The child, therefore, is not an object to be despised, but honored and respected. To the church of to-day our Lord is saying: "Take heed that ye do not undervalue the children." Many churches need to learn this lesson. Some pastors and evangelists take great pride in giving their converts the distinction of being "heads of families," or "mostly adults." It is a great work, indeed, to lead a man of mature years to Christ, and it may be because of the difficulty and rareness of the occurrence that some men take pride in thus characterizing their converts. The truth is, however, that but one inference can be put upon such a report—the pastor thinks lightly of the value of children, and would consider the reception into the membership of his church of children a thing of insignificant importance.

How pathetically often does the eye light on this paragraph in a religious paper: "A gracious ingathering; one hundred accessions, mostly adults." How seldom, if ever, does the eye light on such a paragraph as this, "A gracious ingathering; one hundred

accessions, mostly little children." Why not? "As a pastor," says Bishop William A. Quayle, "I definitely believe that the most fruitful work a people can do is to give heed to the children, to bring them into the church, to tutor them in the church, to put their childish feet on the highway to the heavenly mountain; and in heaven they will rise up and call him blessed."

The note of triumph belongs to the announcement, if it should ever appear, "One hundred accessions, all of them children and youth"; all of them consecrating the freshness and vigor of their best years to Christ; all of them giving not the fag-end of worn out lives to Christ, but the strength and beauty of their youth, as well as the maturity of their manhood and womanhood, and the ripe mellowness of their old age. The sere and the yellow leaf is not so valuable a gift as the bud and the blossom, the flower and the fruit.

V.

In the fifth statement a guard of startling penalty is thrown about childhood. "But

whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18: 6.) The manner of death alluded to appears to have been unknown to the Jews; but Plutarch mentions this punishment as being common in Greece and Rome. It was regarded as the most swift and terrible punishment for crime.

How great must be the sin of obstructing the child's way to the kingdom of heaven! The Greek verb translated "offend" in the Old Version and "cause to stumble" in the American Revision, originally meant "the stick in a trap on which the bait is placed, and which springs up and shuts the trap at the touch of any animal." Hence, Jesus did not mean simply to "vex" or "wound the feelings" of the child,—this of itself is a matter well worthy of regard by every Christian,—but, rather, "tempting or leading him into evil," by neglect, by bad example, by all that tends to repress the enthusiasm

of childhood for Christ, or by whatever tempts them into the snares of Satan, bad habits, vice, and drink. The word means to mislead, to injure in any serious respect, and especially in their relations as believers on Christ. At all cost, children must be encouraged in their religious inclinations; they must be aided and not hindered on their way to Christ.

The neglected child is the millstone about the neck of modern society. It is the weight upon the wheels that impedes the progress of our Lord's kingdom in the earth. Is it any wonder that the Master uttered so fearful condemnation on the obstructionists? The great task is to keep the road clear. Stumbling means lost time and impaired efficiency. It must be clear to all that our Lord's purpose in these utterances is to help the church to see that the sure and speedy method of Christianizing the world is to capture life at its fountainhead, and direct it unobstructed along proper and legitimate channels.

It is the first duty of the church to protect her heritage of youth, and to champion ev-

ery interest of the child. The age is calling for the conservation of the child in the realm of the physical life. The church should encourage every philanthropic organization that has for its purpose the physical betterment of the child. The "cry of the children," because of poverty, work, cruelty, homelessness, disease, ought to be heard by the Christian church with a sympathetic heart, with a hand ready to help the freshair work, the play-ground work, the socialsettlement work, the orphan's home, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the lawmaker who seeks to make laws for happier childhood. With a knowledge of the Divine resources, and how to bring them to bear upon her tasks, the church ought to pray for the child in his physical need, saying "Amen" to that beautiful petition of Professor Rauschenbusch: "O thou Great Father of the weak, lay thy hand tenderly on all the little children, and on each, and bless them. Be good to all children who long in vain for human love, or for flowers and water and the sweet breath

of nature, and bless with a seven-fold blessing the young lives whose slender shoulders are already bowed beneath the yoke of toil, and whose glad growth is being stunted forever. Grant to all employers of labor stout hearts to refuse enrichment at such a price. Grant to all the citizens and officers of the state which now permit this wrong the grace of holy anger. Help us to realize that every child of our nation is in very truth our child, a member of our great family. By the holy child that nestled in Mary's bosom, by the memory of our own childhood, its joys and sorrows, by the sacred possibilities that slumber in every child, we beseech thee to keep us from killing the sweetness of young life by the greed of gain."

The conservation of the child in the realm of his religious life is an age-compelling need. The church must protect the child from the foes that seek to destroy his pure life.

Queen Victoria had visited one of the great provincial cities of England to perform an important public function. A large

choir composed of three or four thousand boys and girls had been organized to sing a song of welcome. The next morning, when the Queen got back to the palace, she at once sent a message to the mayor of the city which she had visited. It had no reference to the civic formalities, but came straight from the great mother heart of Victoria. This was the message, "The Queen wishes to know, Did the children all get home safely?" Are the children safe? No more important or momentous question can be asked.

The period of adolescence is the time of all times in the life of the developing human being, when he is most susceptible to religious impressions, and responds most readily to the appeal of Christ. He is just coming to a sense of his own individuality. He feels within him the awakening of strange powers and of vague deep longings. He yearns after the ideal, and Christ, presented to him in the right way, precisely meets and satisfies his inward longings. It is an opportunity which, if allowed to pass unimproved, never returns.

Carefully collected statistics show that about seven-eighths of all the people in the world, who profess to be Christians, entered upon the Christian life, or made the Christian profession under the age of seventeen. Professor Starbuck found the average age of conversion of fifty-one men to be fifteen and seven-tenths years, and of eighty-six women, thirteen and eight-tenths years. According to Doctor Luther Gulick, reports from five hundred and twelve officers of the Young Men's Christian Association in the United States and British provinces show that the average age when they were first deeply affected by religious influence was thirteen and seven-tenths. In his book entitled "The Spiritual Life," Professor George Adam Coe presents a chart in which he shows that decisions for Christ may be expected in large numbers between the ages of eleven and seventeen. Above that age the number rapidly decreased, until those who begin the Christian life beyond the age of thirty, represent an almost insignificant fraction. "This chart," says Doctor John

T. McFarland, "is one of the most important things that within fifty years has been thrown down on the table of the church for its study." It clearly outlines the zone of greatest productiveness in the spiritual life of man.

The church must be prompt in her ministry to the child. A policy of neglect is unpardonable and tremendously expensive. Dr. J. Douglas Adams well says: "Better a wire fence at the edge of a precipice, than a magnificent hospital at the bottom of it." Let us be at the wire-fence building, and never rest until it is done. Let us not wait until with sad faces and broken hearts we have to play the part of nurses, to minister to the bruised bodies and souls of those who were once our boys and girls.

When the problem of properly dealing with young life during its early stages of development shall have been solved, the church will enter upon her brightest era since the day of Pentecost. The position of supreme strategic importance in the holy war will then have been won.

In the statement of the Master we are now considering, child faith is recognized—"Whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble." These nine utterances apply primarily to the little child who was the text and object lesson in the discourse. There was a tradition in the early church that this child was Ignatius, afterward saint and martyr.

Childhood is preeminently the period of faith; not a faith to be discounted, as is often done by reason of the fact that it is child faith, but a faith the truest, the simplest, and the most effectual ever known to any period of man's life. After we have gone through with our long drawn out theories of the doctrines, when we come back to faith, we come back to where we were as children. The great doctrine of the atonement must be taken by simple faith. It is at this point that the child has a tremendous spiritual advantage over the man. The man looks for theories, the child hears a message, the man argues, the child enquires. He takes the story for precisely what it is-good news

about God. So we must receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child.

When we hear our children offering their prayers at night, there is often with us a longing that they may keep their faith as fresh and dewy when the years bring them to the strength and glory of young manhood and womanhood, even when the shadows lengthen and they approach the sunset gates where the evening of time and morning of eternity strangely and beautifully meet. There is more than this longing; there is often the confidence that God will pay particular heed to the prayer of the little ones. An old school reader gives the lesson of child faith well: The passengers on the ship were affrighted; the captain gave up hope, and drunk with fear staggered down the stairway.

"But his little daughter whispered, As she took her father's hand, Is not God upon the ocean, Just the same as on the land?"

Awhile ago, a little daughter of eight summers, when a terrific storm was raging,

nestled into her mother's arms, and placing her hands about her neck, said: "Mamma, don't be afraid, God will not let us get hurt if we have been good. He loves us and will take care of us; because he says he will."

In a southern hospital, a little girl was about to undergo a critical operation. When she mounted the table to be etherized, the doctor said: "Mary, before we can make you well we must put you to sleep." "Oh, then, if you are going to put me to sleep," she replied sweetly, "I must say my prayer first." And getting down on her knees and folding her hands, she repeated the prayer taught her by her mother:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take,
And this I ask for Jesus' sake, Amen."

There were some moist eyes, for deep chords were touched, and the surgeon said afterwards, "I prayed that night for the first time in thirty years."

It is upon the intruder of the sacred heavenly precincts of childhood faith to

destroy or misguide it, that the swift and terrible punishment is attached—"It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." No more striking presentation of the inestimable value of child faith, and the importance of its preservation could be given than that of our Lord throwing this guard of startling penalty around it.

VI.

When the disciples, through blindness, were objecting to Jesus receiving little children, he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." (Matt. 19:14; Luke 18:5; Mark 10:14.) The term means, permit, allow them to come. The impulse is within them, and within the hearts of truly pious parents, and the demand of Jesus is that it shall not be obstructed. Of some Jesus said, "Compel them to come," but of the children he said, "Suffer them to come." It was as if he had said, "Simply open the way; they will come if they are permitted to come."

The presence of Jesus must have been distinctly attractive and impressive. Children responded at once to his winsomeness. This is the highest test. Fresh from the hand of God, they are drawn to the pure and good; they are repelled by selfishness and badness; they draw out the best; they are drawn only by the true and beautiful and good. This is an infallible test. This told most of the winsomeness of Jesus. The little child, being a reflection of the divine nature, is at home with Jesus, and readily responds to his call, and reaches out his little arms to receive his embrace.

VII.

The seventh statement of our Lord has an official force and flavor, and may be regarded as primarily a command to the church, "Forbid them not." That the church is, in a large measure, violating this command, greatly to its own loss, and greatly to the injury of the children, scarcely needs to be argued.

"By a policy of neglect, by the almost exclusive expenditure of its energies upon

efforts at adult conversion and culture, by omitting from the architecture of its houses of worship, and in its sermons all consideration of a place for the children, by a failure to provide any well-adapted system of instruction, until very recent years, and only partially so now, and above all by a failure to use the family, in accord with the divine intent, for the training of children in the nurture of a spiritual life, the church is, like the disciples in the incident, forbidding the children to come to Jesus; and the Christ of to-day, like the Christ in that incident, is rebuking his remiss and short-sighted followers for such an attitude."

VIII.

The eighth statement of our Lord comes directly to the heart of the subject, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven." Thus, when the great teacher speaks definitely of the relation of the children to the kingdom of God, he uses the genitive of possession and says "of such." Doctor Henry Van Dyke says, "It is as if Jesus had said, "The kingdom of heaven belongs to such." It is the chil-

dren's inheritance, their possession, their kingdom.

Infant baptism does not represent a cure, nor does it represent a prophecy, it rather represents a fact, a very blessed fact; all children are members of the kingdom of God, and, therefore, are graciously entitled to baptism and all the rights and privileges of the church. Jesus, the supreme theologian "who understood to its bitter roots the nature of man's original sin, and its effects on human nature in the generations which followed, stood in the midst of the centuries and, stooping down, lifted up a little child and held him up before the eyes of all the centuries that should follow after, and declared, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Back of the authority of this divine Teacher we cannot go, and should not care to go."

Standing in the presence of the child, before the warping of a selfish sinful atmosphere has hurt him, we feel the glow of another world, and the touch of baby fingers calls forth all that is tenderest and purest and noblest in human nature. Who can look

into the clear, innocent eyes of the little child and not feel the truth of that line of Wordsworth, "Heaven lies around us in our infancy," and the truth of the immortal words of a greater than Wordsworth, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

There is no place for the little child on earth but the kingdom of God; there is no place for the child when he leaves this world but heaven. There are no heathen children in the world. They may become heathen, but there is no heathen child anywhere in the world. "If Christ should come once again among men and walk our streets," says Dr. J. T. McFarland, "he would take into his arms a child of our fairfaced Anglo-Saxon race and declare of him, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven'; and if he walked vonder in Tokyo, he would take into his arms, in like manner, the brownfaced child of Japan, or in Peking, the yellow-faced child of China, in Lucknow the dark-hued child of India, or in darkest Africa some child of ebony skin, and of each alike he would declare, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

One-third of the human race is saved without any effort on the part of the church. The countless children in heathen and pagan lands are Christ's redeemed ones, and from the laps of the mothers in all these lands, in all the centuries, the little ones have been going up to heaven. Jesus claims them all —"of such is the kingdom of heaven." Some mathematician has calculated that since the creation of man one hundred and twentyfive thousand millions of people have died; of this number more than forty thousand millions were taken away in childhood. The picture gives new charm and attractiveness to the heavenly city. With the addition of every little child, heaven has been made fairer and sweeter.

We do not deny that there are evil tendencies inherited by the child, but they are tendencies which have not become evil. There are no unchristian children in our churches, in our homes, in our land. They may become unchristian, but no one of them now is such. It is the task and obligation of the church to preserve them and keep

them as Christian, claiming them for Christ and his kingdom. This does not assume to exclude the essential work of the Holy Spirit and divine grace in the process. As in the development of the flowers the work of the gardener is supplemented by the rain, dew, and sunshine, who will dare to say that when the church's part is faithfully performed in the religious development of the child, at the proper times, God will not press a thousand kisses of renewal upon the little heart and life.

It is a fearful thing to deal with young life in an unnatural way. Efforts to fasten on children the moods and experiences that belong to hardened adults is a great and awful mistake. The evangelistic method that is best for the hardened sinner, is the worst possible for a little child. The child must be treated spiritually as a child, and not as a grown up. Such normal methods of evangelism must be pursued as shall hold the child in the church, bringing him through such methods into a rich personal consciousness of Christ as his Savior, and then train-

ing him in that Christlikeness of life and service that will send him out, like his Lord, to scatter a divine contagion on mankind.

On the flyleaf of his excellent book entitled, "The Crisis of the Christ," Doctor G. Campbell Morgan has the following beautiful dedicatory words, "To my father and mother, who, forty years ago, gave me to Christ, and who, never doubting the acceptance by him of their child, did from infancy and through youth train me as his; from whom I received my first knowledge of him, so that when the necessity came for my personal choosing, so did I recognize the claims of his love, that, without revulsion, and hardly knowing when, I yielded to him my allegiance and my love, devoting spirit, soul, and body to his sweet will and glad service."

This dedication clearly and beautifully sets forth the philosophy of the ideal Christian nurture and discipleship. When the children are taught from infancy that, having been redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross, they belong to the kingdom of God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, with the dawn

and increase of intelligence, they will come to see that it is their obligation and privilege to recognize his claims to their trust, love, and obedience, and to become partakers in him of the priceless blessings of discipleship. Just when the personal choice of Christ as Savior and Lord takes place, neither parents or children may be able to tell. Normal religious training will not permit a day, in the development of a life, when the individual does not know that he is in the kingdom of God, and a member of his church.

In the light of that sublime utterance of the Great Teacher, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," it is monstrous heresy, a crime against childhood, and a source of incalculable loss to the church to regard the little child as corrupt and depraved, and that children should be expected to serve the devil awhile before they begin to serve the Lord; that they should be expected to pass through an experience of spiritual indifference and ignorance, and undergo a more or less violent process of conversion before becoming

happy, loyal disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This heresy, which, strange to say, has its advocates, is an offense against childhood akin to that named in the fifth statement of his discourse, where Christ holds up sin against childhood as a capital crime in his government. God never looks us more directly in the face than when he looks at us through the eyes of a little child, and we never sin more directly against God's holiness than when we sin against the child.

The doctrine is utterly out of harmony with the teachings of the Master concerning the religious status of the child, and the relation of the church to the children. It refuses to co-operate with God in working out his great purposes in the future of the human race, for through the children the divine ideals are to be realized. The child holds the future, and the only way to save the future is to save the child. We cannot save the child by conceding him to the enemy in his youthhood, and then attempt by special methods to win him back to God in his manhood.

Our methods of approach to the child's heart and mind must be in harmony with the well-established laws and principles that govern the child's growth. Religious development must be made not a matter of miracle and magic, but a part of the child's normal development. One of the fine savings of Bishop Edwin H. Hughes is, "The Church of Christ will be wise when it takes every representative of the generation at the rating which our Lord gives him, confirms his native faith, tells him that now he must in his childish ways do the will of the blessed Master, and leads him on and up until the impulsive outgoings of the young heart are changed into deliberate convictions and fixed purposes to belong to Christ forever and ever."

The United States marine service has two methods of saving life: the life-saving crew and the lighthouse. The former waits for the wreck, and then rushes out to rescue the perishing and care for the dying; the latter stands on some promontory reaching out into the sea, and throws its beams far out

upon the open sea to enable the ship to steer safely into the harbor. This method is to avoid the wreck. Let us continue even more vigorously evangelistic work among the adults who have missed the better way, and have been wrecked by sin; but, at the same time, let us put added and tremendous emphasis upon the lighthouse method of saving the world.

Revivals of religion have marked great epochs in the history of the church. The results are not surprising when we remember that the power which moves in every true revival is the power of the Holy Spirit; that the instrument is the Word of God made alive and imperative by the Spirit's touch; and that the channel or agency of this power is the church of Christ. Characters which have been wrecked by sin are renewed and recast; homes that have been desolated become houses of prayer and praise; the life of the church is deepened, its sympathies broadened, and its faith strengthened. But in productiveness the revival is by no means equal to the more

normal and quieter operations of the law of growth as manifested in the development of the kingdom from within. "It is probable," says Bishop James Atkins, "that the greatest revival period shall come only when the membership of the church shall consist predominantly of a generation reared from infancy in the nurture of the Lord. Then the Word of God, which is the instrument of the Spirit for such ends, will be in the heart, understood in that strange, deep way which becomes possible only by an assimilation in the life of a believer. Such a church will also have a power of witnessing which will be rationally irresistible, and it will, therefore, serve better as a channel through which the Spirit may reach the unsaved."

The church cannot afford to forget that her supreme mission is to give light and to save life. But the hope of the kingdom lies in those whom Dr. J. W. Dawson has felicitously named, "The sons of the tabernacle"; those who never depart from their allegiance to the Highest. It is a real achievement to recover the derelict and bring them to har-

bor and anchorage. It is a greater achievement to bring the life just launched without spot or blemish of personal evil and place it at the King's service.

Whenever the church becomes wise enough to work with God, she will adjust herself to the children with a program of religious training that will keep them within the fold, and insure their growth to a manhood unmarred and unweakened by those hard conditions which are universally present in irreligious adults.

IX.

The last and ninth statement of Jesus concerning children in this connection is a revelation of thrilling interest, "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." (Matt. 18:10.) This is a charming, a climacteric picture of heaven's estimate of the value of childhood.

Children are under the care of the highest order of angels, of those that stand continually in the presence of the Father, and have most direct and immediate access to him. If

Christ so cares for the children, if the highest angels guard them with loving care, then the church should give its most loving attention, its best gifts, its most earnest endeavor in their behalf.

Jesus to-day, standing before all parents and before the whole church, stretching out his hands over the children of the whole world, is saying, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish"; and he is charging parents and the whole church with the great responsibility in seeing to it that through no neglect in care and instruction any one of them should perish. The primary and most pressing obligation of the church is to the children. When the church of Christ assumes this relation and attitude towards the child and adapts her method to the need and possibility of the kingdom of childhood, she will sweep into the coming years with the swing of a conquering army.

The church is here in the world to do what Jesus would do. By teaching and example he commissions his church to en-

throne childhood, to respect it, to love it, to help it, to preserve it, and keep it in the atmosphere of Rudyard Kipling's beautiful prayer:

> Father in heaven, who lovest all, Oh, help thy children when they call, That they may build from age to age An undefiled heritage.

Teach us to rule ourselves, alway Controlled and cleanly, night and day, That we may bring, if need arise, No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

Teach us to look in all our ends On thee for judge, and not our friends, That we with thee may walk uncowed By fear or favor of the crowd.

Teach us the strength that cannot seek
By deed or thought to hurt the weak;
That under thee we may possess
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us delight in simple things, And mirth that has no bitter springs. Forgiveness free of evil done And love to all men 'neath the sun The Church in the Home



The Church in the Home

I N writing of a certain family in the city of Corinth, the apostle makes reference to "the church which was in their house." The object, doubtless, was to describe a home where religion is taught, and piety cultivated. The church was originally a domestic institution. In all the centuries the family has been the chief seat and principal bulwark of true religion.

The family is the greatest of the world's institutions. As the seed is greater than the plant, the fountain than the stream, so the family is greater than the church or the state. It is the organic unit of society, and from it must flow the weal or woe of the race. The character of the homes of a nation will determine its future. The home life is the lining of the world's life. If it is kept pure and wholesome, all life will be made purer and the world better.

Other influences in the larger circles of society may alter the outward appearance of men and women, or determine their paths for later years, or even their destiny for eternity; yet it is in the family that the nature and bent is given the child, which distinguishes the man or woman from other men or women, and plays the most important part in shaping the character of manhood or womanhood. Under any system of society, socialistic or individualistic, the family holds the future in its bosom. The prophecv of the seer, the vision of the poet, and the dream of the humanist will be realized, as the family with each passing century becomes what it ought to be and can be.

Homes are the real schools in which men and women are trained, and fathers and mothers are the real teachers in life. We refer with pride to our Sunday schools, academies, colleges, and churches; but the home, after all, is the greatest trainingschool in the land. The unit of all Jewish and Christian legislation as enacted in the Old and New Testaments, was the home. If

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"the groves were God's first temples, parents were his first priests." In the beginning God placed the first responsibility for the right training and religious instruction of the race upon the parents, and the introduction of the school, whether it be the state school or the church school, has never abrogated that responsibility.

Those who view with some alarm the lapse of authority in the church to-day, as compared with former years, may not be surprised when students of social science, and observers of modern social customs, tell them that there is an equal lapse of parental authority in the family; and we may not be wrong in assuming that the condition of the church is perhaps due to this condition in the family. Another fact, and of no less importance, is that whereas in former years we witnessed frequent conversions in the family as a result of parental solicitude for the spiritual development of the child, to-day such phenomena are rare indeed.

Since home is the place where children are to grow into physical vigor and health, and

to be trained in all that shall make them true and noble men and women, it should be the first and greatest concern of parents to know what influences will best fashion such character.

The form of the structure to become the dwelling-place of the family should not be disregarded in view of its influences upon the family life, because it enters as a factor into the life and character of the children. Its appearance, roominess, decoration, and location will all have much to do with the health, disposition, and morals of the family. If the family can afford but two rooms to call their home, they should put into them just as much educating power as possible. Children are fond of pictures, and pictures in a house, if they be pure and good, have a wondrous influence in refining their lives. In these days of cheap art, when prints and engravings can be purchased at such small cost, there is scarcely any one who may not have on the walls of his home some bright bits of beauty, which will prove an inspiration to his children. A home

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clean, tasteful, whether large or small, with simple adornments and pleasant surroundings, is an influence of incalculable value in the education of children.

Greater and more important than the dwelling and its adornments are the unseen, yet potent forces of the family life, which, after all, constitute the real home. The ideal home is the one with "the church in the house." There is the atmosphere of the true family spirit where love reigns supreme, and worship is maintained. These two principles when established make home, though it be a tent or a cottage, and provide conditions for the growth of character into Christ-like beauty.

In our homes we are growing immortal lives; they must, therefore, be made true spiritual conservatories. Children are of more worth than all the flowers. It is said that Joseph and Mary marveled at the things which were spoken of the child Jesus when they carried him into the temple. There was here the mystery of a life just begun, whose unfolding should be for the

help and glory of mankind. As the beautiful mother rocked the precious babe in her arms, as she sang snatches of the sweet song of Israel, as she watched him sleeping, there must have come day by day the sense of how great and how wonderful was the duty which God had given her. When a mother carries to its little cot her sleeping child, and before leaving it smooths back the hair from its forehead, and puts her kiss upon its lips, and breathes over it a mother's prayer, let her remember that a dignity surrounds the work of caring for that child that angels do not possess.

The little child must be trained to be a worshiper of God. This can be done most successfully by first teaching him that God is worthy of worship. It is well to begin with the thought that the child is to return to God some gift for all the gifts which God has given to him. Teach him that there is one way in which God may receive a gift—the gift of human adoration and praise for the Father's love.

Sometimes children have false notions of God. This is not natural, but the result of false teaching. They are made to think of him as a policeman, who is constantly watching around the corner to catch them if they have done wrong. It is the duty of parents to remove all false ideas of God from the child's mind, and to teach him that God is a loving Father. When old Hector, clad in armor, went to say good-by to his child, the child was afraid and ran away from him. Hector knew the cause and casting aside his armor, stretched out his arms, and the child, smiling, came running and bounded to his bosom. Children love birds, flowers, trees, rivers, fields, and hills. Let them know that God is the giver of all these beautiful things which they enjoy. Mrs. Browning has described in the following verses the thoughts of God that should be found in the heart of the child:

"They say that God lives very high; But if you look above the pines You cannot see our God; and why?

"And if you dig down in the mines You never see him in the gold, Though from him all that's glory shines.

"God is so good, he wears a fold Of heaven and earth across his face— Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

"But still I feel that his embrace
Slides down by thrills, through all things
made,
Through sight and sound of every place.

"As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,
Half-waking me at night, and said,
'Who kissed you through the dark, dear
guesser?'"

Life's highest refinements cannot come with any education, however elaborate, unless there is this first lesson in the reverence toward God, and unless the child is a worshiper, practicing the presence of God. Almost daily we come in contact with some simple life, shorn of many advantages, that has the grace and attractiveness of perfect

poise, confident before all, yet modest before the humblest, never saying or doing what is jarring or out of harmony, but always the light of all who pass by. A mystery, you say? No, it is a life that has learned the primary lesson of all cultivation—the reverence for God learned in worship.

Moreover, in the worship of God the child learns the lesson of love, it is the summit of life. "The perfection of love is not reached till the love goes beyond the love for imperfect creatures and becomes love for God. Love for God may be expressed chiefly, and perfectly in worship. It is the gift which love can bring, in its unique way, to God. If you wish to be assured that when you are old and querulous your child will show you the patience and reverence which are due you; if you wish to be sure that he is to have in him the essential spirit of loving kindness for all about him, both high and low, then you must teach him the love which culminates in the love given to God in worship."

The home is the most ancient of the world's institutions, and religion has always constituted its real heart. When there were only two beings on the earth, and no organized church, prayer and praise were heard. Milton represents Adam and Eve as addressing their morning thoughts in concert to God:

"Soon as they came to open sight
Of dayspring and the sun,
Lowly they bowed adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various styles."

When the whole church of God was in the ark of the flood, family worship was the only devotion. The custom was clearly established in the days of Abraham. Isaac's altar at Beersheba and Jacob's altar at Bethel were family monuments. Moses gave definite instruction concerning worship in the home. Christ was often found in prayer with his family, the apostles.

If religion is maintained in the home there must be family worship, where all assemble to listen devoutly to God's word and

bow reverently in supplication at God's feet. The family altar should be established and dedicated before any other consideration, because it is the most powerful agency in making the home sacred, and endearing it forever in the hearts of those who, in after years, may look back to the days of childhood spent in an atmosphere permeated with its precious incense.

The influence of godly example, the memories of the home altar, the abiding power of holy teachings and the grace of God descending perpetually upon the young life in answer to believing prayer, give it such an inspiration and impulse toward all that is noble and heavenly that it goes out to scatter the divine contagion, and to be a blessing to others. When Mrs. Lincoln was nearing the end of her earth life, she sang a stanza of a favorite hymn, then pronounced a mother's blessing upon her son, and committed the family to God's care and keeping. Then followed a few moments of silence. The father was sitting with bowed head at the bedside. The son had risen from his knees, turned

his face to the wall, and was sobbing as if his heart would break. Presently the father said, "Mother, Abraham will never be able to sing as good as you can." "No, may be not," she replied, "but he may cause others to sing. All his life we have named his name in our family prayers, and I have tried to be such a mother to him that when he goes out from home he may be ready for whatever mission God may have for him, and by his work make others sing."

Authors have always done their best work in the hours when the mood has been retrospective, and the memories of home and childhood have stood forth in soft clear light, and father and mother and their sweet influences have lent warmth and richness to the reason and imagination. In seeking ont the most popular poems of Burns, we pass by all those in which the poet exposes hypocrisy, or laughs at human frailty, or smites man's sin. His highest flights of genius were in those hours when he sang of home and love and friendship. Asked to name the greatest works of Dickens, Victor Hugo,

Tennyson, Lowell, Browning and Longfellow—those that men count immortal—it is always safe to answer, "They are those that are revelatory, and tell the story of the joys and sorrows, and hopes and loves of childhood's home." Take the Christian home out of literature and music, and it would be like taking warmth out of the sunbeam, sweetness out of the rose, ripeness from the peach, the soul from the body, and God from the sky.

There is nothing in all literature more impressively beautiful than the picture Burns presents of the "Cotter's Saturday Night." We crown him the supreme master of sweet song in those hours when he goes homeward with the cotter on a Saturday night, and draws nigh to some sweet cottage, nestling under green leaves in some lovely valley, sees the greensward in front, the bonnie brier bush looming hard beside the door, the wealth of ivy creeping o'er the windows; sees the inner walls white washed to look like driven snow; the Bible lying open on the stand, the mother sitting by the

hearth, and kneels again with these humble folk to commit the days and the years to the mercy of the all-forgiving, all-guiding, allloving God.

A worthy appreciation of the home would give it imperial rank among the agencies that contribute to the true progress of civilization. Its supremacy appears in the fact that it sustains divine relations toward society and civilization. Blackstone's Hornbook of English Law defines the parent as in lo dei—"in place of God." When the philosophers affirm that every sage and seer and statesman has had a great mother or father, they affirm that the home is the foundation of power and the mainspring of progress. When Wordsworth said, "My parents made vows for me," he meant that there was in his nature a certain secret and mysterious predisposition toward the love of nature and poetry that had in them the zeal and sanction of the divine call. Luther had his love of liberty, Richter his love of writing, and Goethe his taste for literature, as a mother's gift; Augustine, Otterbein, and the Wesleys

were swept forward upon their great career as ministers by the tides that flowed down from their mothers' lives. Many of the men who have led, and will continue to lead the world, as the pillar of cloud in the olden time led the hosts of God through the desert, were called to the ministry before their eyes opened to the light of day, and were consecrated and trained at the family altar. If the depleted ranks in the Christian ministry are to be filled, it will be when religion is re-established in the home, when family altars are built or rebuilt, and a flame from heaven rekindles their quenched fires. The prophets of God have no more urgent duty, in these days, than to summon parents to this great and important service.

Family worship should be observed at least once a day, in the presence of the entire family. "Every day will I bless thee." (Psalm 145:2.) Two services daily would be preferable. "It is a good thing . . . to show forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night." (Psalm 9:1, 2.) The primitive Christians

began and closed the day with prayer. Nature would seem to direct us to these seasons. Each day is a little life, which should be opened and closed with prayer.

Family worship, as a rule, should be conducted by the father as patriarch of the home. Some times rotation, according to age and gifts of members of the family, is found to be profitable. The service should be made pleasant and attractive, so that it will be anticipated with eagerness on the part of each member of the family. It should be enlivened by pleasing variety. Instead of being stately and formal, it should be made simple and familiar.

The Scripture lesson should be carefully selected—a parable, a simple narrative to the extent of ten or twelve verses, or a Psalm may be read. Some families find it profitable to read the selection assigned for the day in the Home Readings in the Sundayschool lesson helps. For variety, the lesson may be read by the leader, or by verses in turn, or it may be read responsively. An occasional explanatory remark, an incident

that illustrates the thought will brighten the worship and enhance its interest for children.

Singing should form part of the service. Some one suggests that it will be found profitable on Sabbath evenings to hold a little family service of song, reading a verse or two of Scripture, and then singing a song appropriate to the sentiments of the services of the day. When Christ had instructed his family, the twelve apostles, he sang a hymn with them. There is no argument for sacred music in the church that does not apply with equal force to the family.

If there is a musical instrument in the home, its use will add much to the interest of worship. After the reading of the Scripture lesson, and before the prayer, let the mother, or one of the children play the instrument, and all unite in singing a sacred song. The children will especially be interested in this part of the service, and its impressions will abide with them through life as a tender memory. Of music in the home Alaric A. Watts beautifully writes:

Mysterious keeper of the key That opens the gates of memory, Oft in thy wildest, simplest strain We live o'er years of bliss again!

The sun-bright hopes of early youth, Love, in its first deep hour of truth— And dreams of life's delightful morn Are on thy scraph-pinions borne!

To the enthusiast's heart thy tone Breathes of the lost and lovely one, And calls back moments, brief as dear, When last 'twas wafted on his ear.

The gloom of sadness thou canst suit The chords of thy delicious lute; For every heart thou hast a tone, Canst make its pulses all thine own!

The prayer should be brief, free from all stereotyped phrases and couched in simple language that all can understand. It should express real need in a few words earnestly and truthfully presented. Outside interests should not be omitted entirely, but it should be a prayer chiefly for the little group that

kneels about the altar, sometimes taking up the members by name, and carrying to the Lord the particular needs of each. It is often well to close the prayer with the entire family uniting in the Lord's Prayer.

The influence and blessing of the family altar is beyond estimate. Bowing in prayer together in the morning strengthens all the household for life's duties. The children go out under sheltering wings, having been committed to the Father's loving care. These are perilous days in which we are living. Every home needs the refuge of religion. It affords home security and happiness, removes family friction, and causes all the complicated wheels of the home machinery to move on noiselessly and smoothly. It causes the members to reciprocate each other's affections, hushes the voices of recrimination, and exerts a softening and harmonizing influence over the heart. There is no lovelier sight than a family at prayer. So sacred should this duty be that no press of labor, no interference of circumstances should ever cause it to be unperformed. To

begin the day without family worship, may be to the household something like leaving open the gates of a besieged city, with those within open to the attacks of the enemy.

The church of to-day may well lament an evident decline of family worship and religious education in the home. The place of the home in religious education is central and fundamental. If religion dies out of the family it cannot elsewhere be maintained. A society in which there is no religious family will never be made religious by Sunday schools, revival meetings, conventions, and churches. A meeting-house religion is a very poor substitute for dwellinghouse religion. Says Doctor Littlefield: "The great task before us now is to make the family what Jesus made it, the symbol of the kingdom of God, and the basis for instruction upon the character of God and the nature of the religious life. Supremely, the family must give expression to the religious life through positive acts of devotion and through church attendance. Family worship and Bible reading must be re-established."

The tendency of our busy age to ignore or shift parental responsibility for children's moral and religious education is perilous. No business interest can be of such importance as to justify a man's evasion of the sacred duties which he owes to his family. What will it profit a father if he gain the whole world and lose his own children?

Says Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman: "I was standing in Tiffany's great store in New York, and I heard a salesman say to a lady who had asked him about some pearls, 'Madam, this pearl is worth seventeen thousand dollars.' I was interested at once and said, 'Will you kindly let me see the pearl that is worth seventeen thousand dollars?' salesman put it on a piece of black cloth, and. I studied it carefully. I said, 'I suppose Tiffany's stock is very valuable.' And, as I looked around that beautiful store, I imagined them bringing all their stock up to my house and saying, 'We want you to take care of this to-night.' What do you think I should do? I should go as quickly as possible to the telephone and call up the chief of

police and say: 'I have all Tiffany's stock in my house, and it is too great a responsibility. Will you send some of your most trusted officers to help me?' You would do the same wouldn't you? But I have a little boy in my home, and for him I am responsible. I have had him for nine years, and some of you may have just such another little boy. Turning to this old Book I read this word: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, what shall he give in exchange for his soul?' It is as if he had all the diamonds and rubies and pearls in the world, and held them in one hand, and just put a little boy in the other, and the boy would be worth more than all the jewels. If you would tremble because you had seventeen million dollars' worth of jewels in your house one night, how can you go up to your Father and the lad be not with you?"

Family worship should be supplemented by the incorporation of an intelligent educational purpose in its program. In some way there must be a real strengthening of

the sense of family responsibility for the religious education of the child. It is for the church to strengthen the home at this point by inspiring and training parents to take up the work they have neglected, and by giving them definite, systematic help in maintaining family worship, and in the religious training of their children. A simple manual, outlining these duties, would be of great value to every home. This should be supplemented with a few books such as: "A Study of Child Nature," by Elizabeth Harrison; "Beckonings From Little Hands," by Patterson DuBois; "Hints on Child Training," by H. Clay Trumbull; "The Girl In Her Teens," by Margaret Slattery; "The Boy Problem," by William Byron Forbush; and "Secrets of Happy Home Life," by J. R. Miller. A number of others might be mentioned equally as good, and none of them expensive.

The purpose of the home is to make possible a normal religious experience by providing the fitting and favorable environment. In the fulfillment of the divine command,

"Ye must be born again," the parent is a coworker with God. The new birth of the child, whether immediate or gradual as the budding flower, is but the beginning, and needs for further development the inspiration and guidance of helpful surroundings. Physical growth and mental culture are dependent in a large degree upon environment, and the spiritual life is none the less so. The message of the church to the home is that human life need never become a ruin and a desolation.

If parents give time and study to the construction of conservatories for the growing of flowers which fade in a day, they should willingly pay any price for the creation of a home atmosphere that will make it a true conservatory for the growing of souls that live forever.

The church in the home is a blessing in prosperity and an angel of solace in the day of adversity. "The equipage and livery and plate may vanish; the valued paintings and gorgeous furniture may fly under the hammer; fortunes may be scattered, and the

very mansion be forsaken, yet in a cottage or a garret, within bare, cold walls shunned by the parasites of other days, the Christian family may rejoice that the daily worship of God still remains, and, though with tearful eyes, they can still from the bottom of their hearts give thanks."

Sorrow will inevitably come to every home. We cannot build a mansion so costly that death cannot enter and lay his hand upon the most precious jewel. At such a time the splendors of architecture, the beauties of art, the luxuries of costly furnishings or adornments cannot soothe the aching heart or answer the soul's longings. ligion furnishes solid comfort. Standing by the open grave, and listening to the immortal words, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," the birds that had hushed their songs in the darkness of the valley tune again their voices, and the flowers that had closed their petals open again in beauty, and we go away

in the hope that soon we shall meet our loved one in the home of "many mansions."

The influence of "the church in the home" is great, silent, irresistible, and permanent. Like the calm, deep stream, it moves on in silent, but overwhelming power. The earth is not sufficiently wide, nor the heavens sufficiently high to allow a child to drift from the influence and memory of such a home. It is the choicest emblem of heaven.

Overtaken by misfortune, poverty, and sickness, John Howard Payne went staggering down the streets of Paris toward the garret where he slept. Darkness had fallen. The sleet drove against his face, and the cold pierced his thin cloak. Suddenly a door opened, and the light streamed forth upon the street, the glow and warmth perfuming all the air. Into the arms of the man who stood upon the threshold, happy children leaped, while the beaming mother stretched forth her babe. In a moment the door closed, the light faded into darkness, and the youth stood again in the sleet and cold, little dreaming that what he was learning in suf-

fering he was to teach in song. Finding his way to the garret where he slept, his shivering form bends over the table, his head resting upon his arms, while his lonely heart goes bounding across the seas, and memory is busy gathering up the scenes of childhood's home. Then weeping, he sobs once and again, "There is no place like home."

The old homestead rises before his vision, he crosses once again its threshold, sees familiar forms, hears familiar voices. Presently, the picture changes, and his home of a while ago, embalmed with sweetest memories is transferred to the future, and the vision of meeting in heaven those whom he had loved and lost ravished his soul. Then lighting a candle, and brushing away the tears, with leaping heart and shining face, he saw the "vision splendid," and sang of home and hopes and heaven.



The Sunday School and Public Worship



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The Sunday School and Public Worship

PRACTICAL recognition of the relative place of the Sunday school and public worship in the process of religious education, is classed as one of the most urgent needs in church work.

It ought to be the natural thing for parents to be with their children in Sunday school, and children with their parents in the public worship. Unfortunately, such is not the case. It is estimated that a majority of the adult attendance upon public worship are not in the Sunday school, and that eighty per cent. of the Sunday school children are not in the public services of the church. This abnormal condition is the cause of many problems now upon us. A distinguished New York pastor in discussing the situation says: "In our modern society children of professing Christians seldom go to church during their best habit-forming

years, while, conversely, Christian parents frequently neglect the Sunday school during their best service-giving years. In this manner parents and children of Christian homes are serving God along separated parallel lines, which, as we know, never meet. The Sunday-school line is the shorter line, but it has no regular terminus at the church door."

Concern in the matter centers chiefly in the absence of children from public worship. In one of a series of articles recently appearing in the British Weekly entitled, "A League of Worshiping Children," the writer goes on to show the decrease of membership in some of the great churches of England, and offers as a solution the bringing of the children into the church, and training them to become worshipers in the church. He gives figures to show that the attendance of children at the hours of worship is lamentably small. No question before the Federal Council of Churches commanded more serious attention than the religious training of children, and that great body of leaders passed a resolution urging parents to com-

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pel their children to attend public worship. It is not uncommon in these days for church councils to pass resolutions deploring a growing tendency upon the part of the Sunday school to drift away from the public services of the church, and, further, to acknowledge that these conditions present the most urgent, and at the same time one of the most difficult problems the church has to deal with just now.

While it is no doubt true that some of these claims are greatly exaggerated, it nevertheless must be admitted that the matter does present an urgent and difficult problem. The reasons assigned for the absence of children at public worship are various. Some say that parents are indifferent. Others insist that the blame attaches to the pastors, because they do not interest the children. Still others believe that it is due to having the Sunday school and the church service in immediate succession as to time. While another class attributes it to the failure of officers and teachers in the Sunday school to impress upon the children the priv-

ilege and duty of attending public worship, and to make them feel that they are wanted and expected in the church service.

With the rise of modern pedagogy and the study of child nature, the child has moved up into the first place in the thought of our age. Emerson quotes an old gentleman as saying that all his life had been spent in a most unlucky time of transitions—"When he was a boy the greatest respect was paid to old age, and now that he was old the greatest respect was paid to children." In our churches, this respect paid to children has been particularly focused upon the Sunday school, which explains why, in the popular mind, the Sunday school is the child's church, and public worship is held for adults. And why "Sunday-school children" rather than "church children" represents the ideal with which the age contents itself.

The disparagement of emphasis is marked. Organization for promoting the Sunday school is almost at the point of perfection—denominational, township, county, state, provincial, international, world. Special

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literature is published in great abundance for its improvement; but there are as yet few, if any organizations specifically for the promotion of the church service, and there are no publications devoted specially to this object. For this disparagement, however, the Sunday school is not responsible.

What can be done to change these conditions and to strengthen the link that connects the Sunday school with public worship? This is a question familiar to every pastor, officer, and church worker. The answer to the question depends upon the answer of another lying back of it, namely, Is it desirable that children should attend public worship? Considering this question, let us stop to inquire concerning the distinct function or place of the Sunday school and the public worship in the religious education of the child, and in the development of Christian character.

The church as here implied is a local organized body of believers in Jesus Christ whose purpose is the promotion of the kingdom or reign of Christ. The Sunday

school is one of the organized agencies of the church through, or by means of which the church seeks to realize its purpose. It is, therefore, not an institution in and by itself.

By "public worship" are meant the public devotional meetings of the church which are carried on especially as occasions of worship, with the conviction that worship is essential to the proper development of the Christian life. Prominent in these services are prayer, instruction through the reading and preaching of the Word, the administration of the ordinances and sacraments, with the purpose of winning people to Christ, promoting loyalty to him and to the church, and activity in personal service.

The Sunday-school service is the assembly of this particular agency of the church, especially for the work of personal instruction in the Word of God. While it is devotional in character, its method and end is analytical and educational, while that of the church services is spiritual and devotional. In other words, the Sunday school is prima-

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rily for instruction with an element of worship. The public service is primarily for worship with elements of instruction.

From these considerations it is clear that our love and responsibility for children are not met by making the Sunday school a substitute for the church. Important as is the Bible school, it was never intended to be a church nor a substitute for a church, and cannot take the place of the church in the child's religious life. The chief need of children is not instruction, but impressions that inspire right impulses.

In some instances, children are excused from attending public worship on the grounds that they cannot understand the sermon—the service is too lengthy, and, therefore, distasteful, and against the inclinations of the children. If required to attend, they are likely to acquire an aversion to the church. It would seem quite possible for the church to meet and overcome logical objections; but no sane parent or teacher would apply such logic to the general training of the young. Should the child

not be required to conform to any rule of conduct or regimen of instruction which would not be in accordance with his immature judgment, taste, or disposition?

The theory that children acquire an aversion to the church by being required to attend public worship is not in harmony with the facts of experience. Those who were reared under such requirements do not in mature years think of it as having worked a hardship, but, rather, as the years of life accumulate, the memory of those days becomes more beautiful and delightful, supplemented by an increasing sense of gratitude to parents for such discipline. Moreover, it is not a matter of observation that children, who are trained up by their parents to go to church, are the people who, when they come to mature years, constitute the absentee class from church attendance and services.

Furthermore, it is unfair to children and youth in these days of unparalleled educational advantages to say that their inability to comprehend the sermon is sufficient ground for not attending public worship.

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Such is not always the case. The mother of Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said to a friend, "I get most out of a sermon not by trying to follow the minister, but by having Abe go over it and explain it when we return home." The boy was at that time about ten years of age.

In the house of God, as a rule, the first and deepest religious impressions are made. It is the place of visions and vows—the very gate of heaven. While only twenty per cent. of our Sunday-school pupils attend public worship, it is estimated that eighty-seven per cent. of all additions to the church come from the twenty per cent. who do attend.

Children need the spiritual culture that comes only through the worship of the great congregation. The spiritual atmosphere of the sanctuary becomes the breath of life to the soul, not only of adults, but of children as well—a holy medium, a hallowed afflatus, a spiritual ozone, which, though involuntarily absorbed, vitalizes the higher nature. "The quiet of the hour," says Bishop Vincent, "compels even the small child to

quietude. 'This is God's house, I must be quiet. This is God's day, I must be reverent. This is God's book, I must hear it. This is God's minister, I must be attentive.' 'Simply to be present in such a place, even though the mind does not fully comprehend the utterances from the pulpit, is to be impressed and benefited by the heavenly influences.

It is one of the fine sayings of the late Charles Cuthbert Hall: "The church and the children belong together. The church cannot do without the children. The children cannot do without the church." A recent writer recalls that a mother started to withdraw from a service in the City Temple, London, with a prattling child, when the pastor, Dr. Parker, said: "I would not have you leave this service with that child. We need the child in the midst." It is a true note. We need the child to keep the child spirit fresh in us. There is need that our age learn the lesson of reverence, and that the atmosphere of our churches be worshipful, but when such atmosphere is gained by the absence of the child, it carries with it

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the prophecy of coming death. "In that holy city that is the ideal and the goal of our endeavor, one of the attractions given is that the ring of the child's voice will be heard in the street. There is a musical quality in such a strain that can come from no other source, and that the music of the eternal sphere would be minus but for that most necessary note; and in our pursuit of the ideal the loss of the note of childhood mars the whole anthem of worship."

Over against any so-called psychological reason that might be urged against church attendance upon the part of the child must be placed that greatest and most significant fact of psychology; namely, that child-hood is the habit-forming period of life. One of the greatest services of the child psychologist is that he is putting tremendous emphasis upon this fact. It is a serious matter, indeed, for children to outgrow the Sunday school and pass out into the world without any practical knowledge of the church's services, sermons, and sacraments, and without attendance upon public worship having be-

come a fixed habit. The childless church, like the childless home, will perish with a single generation.

The responsibility of forming the churchgoing habit rests primarily with the home. Family discipline in these days is especially lax in the matter of church attendance. Many parents do not even ask their children to go to church, and, when they do, they may or may not sit in the family pew. Some group them in a children's church whatever that may mean. The home has very largely ceased to be what it once was, the unifying sanctuary. It is the duty of parents to bring their children to the church. Monstrous. indeed, is the idea that religion is optional in life and that children must be trained in the formation of all other habits than religious habits. Parents have been delinquent in the performance of their first and highest duty to their children until they have brought them to the church, and trained them in forming the church-going habit, and have thus implanted true principles deep in their hearts, which shall rule

the entire future of their lives. It is cruel to rob a child of the means of its highest development.

The presentation of the child Jesus in the temple, with its attendant circumstances, including the reception the little babe received, presents a picture that is fascinating in its simplicity, and impressive in its suggestiveness. No sooner had the mother carried her child into the temple than the venerable Simeon tottered to her side and took the little child into his arms, and blessed God. Forgetting the dignity of the company that had assembled in the temple on that occasion, let us think of the one phase of the beautiful picture that bears directly on our problem, and that points the way to its solution namely, a family sitting together in God's house, and a childless old man rejoicing to have them there and especially happy because of the presence of the child. In other words, the mother knew her responsibility to bring the child to church; and the aged and lonely Simeon gave the child welcome. The picture presents the

two important lessons: First, It is the duty of parents to bring their children to the services of the church. Second, It is the duty of the church to welcome the children when they are brought.

This problem will be solved when the home, Sunday school, and church unite in desire and purpose to have it solved. The Sunday school must make the pupils feel that it really wants them to attend public worship, and the church must show that she really wants the children in her services. And it may be assumed that if the church would show a real interest in the matter, parents, and Sunday school, and Christian Endeavor would also add their voices to hers.

It is manifestly a mistake on the part of pastors, and church officers to undertake to remedy these conditions by publicly parading them before the school and congregation. It is a sure way to defeat the ends to be accomplished. A critical, fault-finding spirit upon the part of leaders has never resulted in remedying conditions that were not ideal

in a local church. Let the pastor give himself prayerfully to the study of the problem with a view to finding the way to its solution. And then so revise his program for the work and services of the church as will make it easy and natural for the problem to solve itself. This he must do in the spirit of faith and love, and both the church and Sunday school will gladly follow in the movement.

What is the outlook? This should be a day of encouragement rather than discouragement, because men are no longer satisfied with lamenting conditions, but are setting about with patience and determination to find the remedy. By comparison it might be shown that the present tendency of the Sunday school is not away from the services of the church—there are reasons for believing that the opposite is the case that the former days were not better in this respect than the great days in which we are now living.

Because so many leave the Sunday school at the church hour may not reveal an actual

decrease of interest in public worship over former times. The percentage of those who left at the close of the school session when the school was small was as great, if not greater than it is to-day, though not so noticeable then as now, because the crowd looks bigger.

Moreover, the organized Adult Bible Class movement within seven years has enlisted thousands of adults, not only in Bible study, but also in the services and work of the church. Not for a long time has so much interest been shown in the matter of securing the presence of children at the public worship as in these opening years of the new century. Records of attendance at public worship are now being kept by many schools. The organization of go-to-church bands, leagues, and guilds is a movement that is growing in favor and success. All of these movements indicate a rising interest upon the part of the church in the matter of securing the presence of children at public worship.

The following from a questionnaire was recently addressed to a number of pastors,

Sunday-school editors, secretaries, superintendents and distinguished leaders in the organized Sunday-school work: "How overcome the seeming tendency on the part of children and young people of the Sunday school to drift away from the services of the church?" From the list of responses the following are attached. They are valuable contributions to the study and solution of the problem:

Dear Doctor Fout:

Answering your letter, opened to-day: I think there is no trouble whatever in holding the children and young people in the church if the church services are made attractive to them.

Very truly yours,
John Wanamaker.

Sunday School Superintendent, Bethany Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Brother:

This whole matter was gone over with a great deal of care by us the other day, and it was the frank judgment of all present that

it was as difficult a question as the church had to deal with just now. In my own judgment, the ideal plan is for a morning service for worship and an afternoon service for Bible study, in which the people of the church and the classes come together for that purpose. The pastor of the church should have charge of the gathering, and devote as much of his time to it as to any other department of the church.

Yours very sincerely,

John Balcom Shaw.

Pastor Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill.

Three Oaks, Michigan.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Your letter of the 4th inst. has been received and read with interest.

Replying to your question as to the drift of the Sunday school away from the public worship of the church, permit me to say that, in my judgment, it would seem quite possible to overcome such a tendency, by adapting the church services to the Sunday school, and by giving the school some place

in them. Will not the whole church in the Sunday school bring the whole Sunday school into the church?

Rev. D. H. Class, of Pontiac, Michigan, has solved this problem satisfactorily to himself through a combination service. Others testify to the success of the plan. I trust your letter will lead to most excellent results in many churches.

Very sincerely yours,

E. K. Warren.

Chairman Board of Trustees, International Sunday School Association.

My dear Doctor:

I do not think that the present tendency of our Sunday-school constituency is away from the church. My experience leads me to believe that the reverse is true. More and more I think our Sunday-school workers are coming to feel the importance of church attendance. It is doubtless true that many of the young people, especially of the Junior years, do not attend church. One reason for this, however, is that the church service as at present arranged does not take the Junior

age into consideration. The church service of to-day is planned almost entirely for the grown-ups. My conviction is that before we can get more of our scholars into the church service, we must plan that service with these young folks in view. We are not, as a denomination, endorsing any combination service. We have not enough information at hand to positively endorse any particular plan. Services of this sort seem to be very successful in some places, but not in others. Wish I might have the privilege of talking these matters over with you.

Faithfully yours, David G. Downey.

Corresponding Secretary Board of Sunday School Methodist Episcopal Church, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Replying to your inquiry concerning the Sunday school and the church service, it is my judgment that three parties are responsible for the fact that not more of the members of the school attend the preaching service. I do not suggest any order of priority, but will name one. First, the *superintendent*,

who should always call the attention of the school to the preaching service and kindly insist that all remain for it. This is assuming that it follows the Sunday school as it generally does. He should, in the workers' meeting, make it very plain that the teachers, all of them, are expected, of course, to attend the preaching service. They are the authority and example of perfect conduct to the pupils. They must do it. Second, the pastor. He should be in the school all the time as an example to the laity to be there. Then he should request the presence of all the school in the public service. Boys and girls can be employed in the opening service to sing; to sit on the front seat; to note and write down the text and its location; to usher the congregation; to receive the offering, etc. He should preach down to their understanding. He might diagram his discourse on a blackboard for them to copy, if he can use chalk. He should be present in the workers' meeting to impress there his desires and plans and give and take counsel. The third party that I name is the parents.

It is an urgent duty of parents to train their children in church attendance as a habit of life. To "train" includes three steps. 1. Precept. A raw recruit in military service is told that he must "stand erect with heels together and on a line; to throw back the shoulders and to lift the head; to cast the eyes upon the ground sixty paces in front; and to place the little finger of each hand behind the seam of his pantaloons." That is precept correctly stated; and it is necessary; but the recruit does not understand. 2. Example. The drill sergeant now shows by taking the position himself, explaining each part and demonstrating it; but that is still insufficient. He must next be made to do the thing himself. That is, 3. Compulsion. Exactly so in training the "child in the way he should go," and it is the duty of the parents to do it. Deut. 6:6-9. Precept must be supported by example else "your acts thunder so loud that I cannot hear what you say" (Emerson), will be true. In addition, the parent must compel, if necessary, the child's attendance

at church. "If my child could attend only one service of the church," says Bishop Vincent, "that must be the preaching service."

Robert Cowden.

Secretary Emeritus Sunday School Board United Brethren Church, Dayton, Ohio.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Replying to your letter, permit me to suggest a few things that I know have been tried with more or less success, with reference to securing the attendance of Sundayschool scholars upon the regular church services.

First. Give the pastor a good, fair opportunity, as often as he thinks it is wise, to speak to the school as a body and as their pastor, so that they will recognize him as the chief leader of all departments of the church.

Second. We have dismissed our school as a body into the auditorium of the church, making the eleven o'clock preaching hour the closing hour for the school that day, and giving the pupils young and old some important part in the service, such as selecting

and singing a hymn by themselves, or some other definite part of the service, and making all of it bright and sharp and not too long. This has done well and achieved good results. Later on we excused the little children of the beginners' and primary departments upon attendance at this service because it was almost too long for them.

Third. In every case the preacher must make special preparations, not only to interest, but to instruct the boys and girls who wait upon his ministry. My observation is, that where the pastor has one or two good paragraphs especially applicable to the young, and will not make his discourse too long, he will always get a good hearing from the younger element.

Fourth. I believe that it is quite possible to take one of the services of the Sabbath day, and make it a combination service for old and young, and this might be alternated between the morning hour and the evening hour.

Fifth. I do not know any church that has fully worked this matter out to its highest

efficiency, but I assure you it is a pressing need, and one about which I have thought a great deal. We can certainly never expect loyal goers to church in its regular services unless we train the children when young, and it is not at all impossible, because it is being done by quite a good many, and there is no hardship in it to the young.

Sixth. Every local church should be provided with a manual of service embodying the very best helps, and the most successful of the methods being used, to overcome the tendency of the Sunday school to drift away from the church service. I am glad you are sending out this questionnaire to gather the best information and experience from various sources. I trust you will put the results of your inquiry in permanent form, as a means of helping to solve this important problem.

Wishing you all blessings in your work, I am, Yours truly,

J. R. Pepper.

Sunday School Superintendent First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Memphis, Tennessee.

My dear Brother:

Replying to your inquiry, How overcome the seeming tendency of the Sunday school to drift away from the church service? Let me say in my judgment much depends,

- 1. On the attitude and conduct of the officers and teachers of the Sunday school. Example and the law of imitation mean much in child life.
- 2. Much depends on the nature of the public worship or service. Children are not interested in sermons preached directly at them. The story form must be used in instructing them from the pulpit as well as in Sunday school. It is called the indirect method. Let the child do his own moralizing.
- 3. Some churches have what is called the Junior Congregation—music, prayer, scripture, sermon—all adapted to child life. I would have the ushers and collectors also of the younger people.
- 4. I think another way to counteract the tendency of which you speak is to revert to the home. There must be definite teach-

ing and acting on the part of parents as to the importance of public worship.

5. We need to make our public worship quite attractive in dignity and spirit, impressing upon the children the fact that God is present. We cannot implant in them a real reverence apart from the public worship of the church.

Yours, as ever, Charles W. Brewbaker.

Secretary Sunday School Board, United Brethren Church, Dayton, Ohio.

Dear Doctor Fout:

I hardly know what to say in answer to your question concerning the combining of the Sunday school and church service. I have never had the opportunity of observing its working for any length of time, neither have we had any experience in that line in our school. I believe if the same ingenuity would be used in working up congregations for our regular worship that has been used in Sunday-school work, the conditions would be different. In the combination of the two

the element of *worship* tends to disappear, a weakness which is already appalling in all Protestant churches, and which, in my humble judgment is the real cause of empty pews. I should like to observe the working of the new system for a period of ten years in some church before adopting it.

We have one of the oldest men's classes in the church. Our average attendance for five years has been sixty-five to seventy. I took a test not long ago and found eighty per cent. of my class to be fairly regular in church attendance, and frequently I see half a dozen fellows who were late for class find places in the morning services. In our Sunday-school councils, the teachers are urged to keep the ideal of regular church attendance before the classes. Of course, many are in the Sunday school who are not in the church but our congregations are twice as large and more regular than they were in the old days of a moribund Sunday school.

Very cordially yours,

A. B. Statton.

Pastor St. Paul United Brethren Church, Hagerstown, Md.

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Dear Doctor Fout:

Concerning your inquiry permit me to say as follows:

We shall understand our problem better if we approach it from a comparative point of view. Not many years ago, we had more members in the church than in the Sunday school. Attendance at church was larger than the school. To-day conditions are reversed in many places. The school enrollment and attendance is much larger than the church membership. Now, I find that the average attendance at public worship on the part of the church membership is equal to, if not above what it was two decades ago, and that there is no real abatement of interest in the regular worship of the church. It is easy for us to be mistaken in our estimates in this day of such marvelous Sunday-school progress. When our school was one-fifth as large as it is now, the percentage of those who left at the close of the school session was as great or greater than it is to-day. I speak from personal observation and comparisons in my own school.

Moreover, I am willing to stand this apparent lack of interest in public worship on the part of the Bible-school people, when I remember that the Bible-school atmosphere and training has transformed the life of the church as well as contributed ninety-eight per cent. to its numerical increase, and the actual working ability and efficiency of the church has been multiplied many fold by the training given in the school.

We are experimenting on the combined service, not to overcome what to some may seem to be the difficulty of getting the scholars into the preaching service—our attendance is fine from the school—but as a means of securing the best spiritual results for the greatest number. The preacher cannot be at his best after he has given as he should of himself in the Bible-school session. There is also the danger of surfeit on preaching. One solid sermon a Sunday is enough preaching to fire for tremendous activity the soul that has properly learned its Bible-school lesson. (There is really too much preaching now in some of our adult Bible classes.)

The difficulty of conducting the combined service so as to retain its reverence and dignity can be overcome by tactful management from the platform. Practice will develop stateliness and devotion. The pastor conducting the last quarter of an hour will be able to sound a deep spiritual and devotional note. Last Sunday a combined service was held for the administering of the Lord's Supper. Five hundred and fifty communed, and the whole service was decorous and deeply impressive.

Yours, as ever, Charles W. Recard.

Pastor First United Brethren Church, Canton, Ohio.

Dear Brother Fout:

Replying to your inquiry, I do not know that I can be of much service to you, but will do my best.

It was my privilege to attend a church recently where the experiment is being made of making the closing part of the Sundayschool program identical with the church

service. This school begins its work at tenthirty, the lesson period being concluded at ten minutes after eleven. The school then marches back and the pastor takes up the morning service. Practically all the children are at the preaching service. I did not notice many people coming in, however, for the church alone. It is an interesting experiment, however.

I know another church where the pastor has organized a league among the children. He gives them a gold badge with the letters L. W. C. These letters hold a secret. The badge is to be retained only so long as the members are faithful to the morning worship. I may say to you, without violating any confidences, that the letters stand for The League of Worshiping Children.

Another church is trying the experiment of a combination service once a month, when the entire Sunday school is retained at the church service. The exercises do not overlap, but the one leads right up to the other.

Of course, you recognize that all the burden of securing attendance at the church services is not on the Sunday school. The preacher, the church officials, and the church ushers have never hurt themselves planning to win a large attendance. I think they ought to bear at least half the responsibility. We might justly say that we give to the morning service as large a proportion of our constituency as the church officials give the Sunday school from theirs.

The subject is a great one though I think it is greatly exaggerated. I have no question that we are doing better than we ever have done, though we might do a great deal better.

Yours sincerely,

I. J. Van Ness.

Editor Sunday School Publications Southern Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

My dear Doctor:

I do not know of any congregation that has successfully overcome the tendency of the Sunday school to drift away from the

stated church services. It is, for the present, one of our unsolved problems. In our Protestant churches the main feature of the service is the sermon, and this, as a general rule, is beyond the comprehension of children. One of our churches in Kansas City. Missouri, is endeavoring to overcome the difficulty by having the children's service in the Sunday-school room at the same hour as the adult service in the auditorium. This does not strike me, however, as satisfactory. Our children need the spiritual culture that can come only through the worship of the great congregation. If we could have a service for worship and another for preaching, it might enable us to solve this problem, but, for the present, I do not see how this is possible. It seems to me that, under the circumstances, the best we can do is for the pastors to take some pains to adapt their services, and especially their sermons to the young.

Yours faithfully,

E. B. Chappel.

Editor Sunday School Publications Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, Tennessee.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Replying to your inquiry concerning the Sunday school and public worship, let me say that not five minutes ago the chairman of our Presbytery's committee on Sundayschool work was in the room consulting with me about an early meeting of the Presbyterian Sunday-school superintendents of Philadelphia, at which this very question is to be considered. It is the plan of the committee to have two superintendents tell what they are doing to secure the attendance of the members of the school at the church services. The several pastors will tell what they are doing to co-operate, each with the superintendent of his own school. Several pastors who have been signally successful in giving short sermons to children at the morning service will tell of their successes and failures. One pastor will preach a children's sermon to a company of children gathered in the neighborhood. In connection with the services there will be given the result of a canvass now being made of the Presbyterian churches of Philadelphia, to see exactly

how many children fifteen years old or younger are in attendance at the services on the Sabbaths of December.

You see that we have been studying the same problem here.

Very sincerely yours,

John T. Faris.

Editor, Sunday School Publications Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Since last summer, I have been following the plan of preaching to the boys and girls of the Sabbath school on the first Sabbath of each month. A boy and girl choir of about twenty takes part in the song service. The sermon is about twenty-two to twenty-four minutes in length. The plan is working well and is bringing results. Some of the youngsters are attending every Sabbath. I make the sermon just as simple as possible, and yet try to have a real sermon, not a kindergarten talk. It is a suggestive fact that the older people seem to take to the sermon for children with considerable avidity. If

you can do something toward bringing Sunday school and church into closer organic relations, making them really one, as they ought to be, you will do something abundantly worth while.

Sincerely yours,

W. E. McCulloch.

Pastor, First United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Doctor Fout:

I realize the problem of which you speak is one of the great problems of the church and Bible school.

To keep the pupils for the preaching service after Bible school, the following plans have worked very well: To have the class and teacher sit together in preaching service; the teacher to make a special request each Lord's Day morning that all members of the class remain; the record of attendance at preaching service kept; give the Bible school something to do in the preaching service; make special mention from the pulpit of the presence of the classes

from the Bible school; make the morning preaching service not too long; eliminate many announcements; eliminate stereotyped opening; join the Bible school and preaching service together as nearly as possible.

Another plan is to contest with some other church or school and see which can have the larger number remain for preaching service.

Our method of combining the two services proved very successful for the hot weather period. I do not deem it advisable, however, for the rest of the year, under present conditions.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

P. H. Welshimer.

Pastor, First Christian Church, Canton, O.

Dear Doctor Fout:

In reply to your inquiry, will say that the problem is giving our people no little concern. I do not know of any local church that has succeeded in solving it effectually.

When I was pastor, at my Sunday school

in the morning, I succeeded in getting a large number of scholars to attend the morning service by offering them rewards at the end of the year for regular attendance at church, making forty-five Sundays the limit. This was not given to them as a reward for church going, but as an expression of appreciation for doing their duty. Of course, I had to bring the matter of the duty of public worship very strongly before them. I do not know of any other way to get it than by enlisting the teachers and superintendent to exert their influence upon the scholars to attend public worship, and by the pastor laying it upon the hearts of the children from his own heart.

> Yours cordially, Charles S. Albert.

Late Editor, Sunday School Publications, Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Your letter regarding the question of the tendency of the Sunday school to drop away from public worship is received. A number

of schools with which I am familiar have their Sunday-school records marked as to whether the pupils have attended at least one church service since the Sunday-school session of the week before. This helps somewhat in the direction you indicate.

Another plan that I find in my own school to be helpful, is to have the pastor given a prominent place in the Sunday-school service, as I count him the first officer in our school. This brings the children and younger people in touch with the pastor, and in this closer relation they follow him into the church service.

There are several churches that I have heard of, but none that I can quote with authority, that are just now trying to combine the main church service and the Sunday school into a two hour session, beginning at ten o'clock and closing at twelve, having a Junior and an adult choir assist in the music, thus combining the church anthem with the special Sunday-school song. The whole congregation, which includes the Sunday school, is seated in classes, each of them hav-

ing a teacher. A short sermon good for adults, and which the children can understand, is preached by the pastor, and the various classes are also taught a twenty or thirty minute lesson by the teachers, and the two hours are so conducted that you could not tell in any one thirty minutes of the period whether it was church or Sunday school—the fact is, it is both from start to finish.

In other words, they are injecting, by having a little more time for it, the teaching function into the main church service and adapting that teaching to the youngest child as well as the oldest and most experienced adult. I believe myself that some day we shall come very largely to this way of doing our work. This may not throw much light upon your question, but these are some of the thoughts that have come to me as I have observed the situation and heard this question discussed.

With best wishes, I am,

Most cordially,

Hugh Cork.

Assistant General Secretary International Sunday School Association, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Doctor Fout:

Your question, "What can be done to overcome the tendency of the Sunday school to drift away from the church?" depends upon what answers can be given to certain other questions. Those questions are:

1. Is it advisable that the children should attend the church service? In olden times it was thought to be very necessary that they should attend. In my young days, all the family, practically, were present at the morning service. When the time for the service arrived, it was assumed that all we youngsters would be ready for church. No light excuse was of any avail for not going. Usually no excuse was thought of. Looking back upon those days, it seems delightfulthe remembrance of the pews being filled with old and young, down even to those who nestled in the laps of the elders! I do not remember that attendance at church was ever felt as a hardship by the young. We had come to think of it as inevitable, and, hence, that it must be right. Of course, going to church was not universal; for ev-

erywhere there were families who were not church-goers, and their children were not compelled or urged to go; but, generally, people on the Sabbath went to the sanctuary, and thought that those who did not go were little better than heathen.

What was the effect upon the young of regular attendance upon the church? Certainly, at least, it got them into the habit of going. It made them feel uncomfortable if by chance it was omitted; much as if they had failed to "say" a prayer at night. Those who were free to spend Sunday as they chose did not form any such habit. I have yet to learn that any one was attracted toward the church by his disregard of church attendance. It may, therefore, be set down in favor of church going by the young that it cultivates a good habit.

It did more than this, judging from my own early recollections, for now and then the preachers said some things, amid things incomprehensible and uninteresting to me, which mightily stirred my conscience and roused deep emotion. Pity it was that none

knew of their effect! For, boy-like, I kept my feelings to myself, and the older people were so little interested in the affairs of little ones! In one of those experiences I came very near going up to the "mourners' bench," and asking for the privilege of confessing Christ. But my parents were not with me, and I hesitated at doing something of which they might not approve. For weeks after, I felt self-reproached at my failure to obey my conscience. It would have been so easy for me then to have become a Christian—so much harder for me when I did so later; as the Savior said of the little ones, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." I tell this experience only for the purpose of showing how the very young may be influenced by church attendance.

2. Do the parents want the children to attend church service? Apparently not. There is not the same authority shown by them in requiring their children to be present at the church on Sunday. Family discipline is lax here as in so many other cases. Parents are relying too much upon the Sun-

day school and the Christian Endeavor society. They think that the two services upon the Sabbath are enough for the little ones. They trust that in those two services they will receive such an impulse in the right direction that when they are mature they will graduate from those youthful institutions into the church. Perhaps many of them will; it is to be hoped that they will; but would not this be made more certain if from their infancy up they kept in the church?

3. Does the Sunday school wish the scholars to attend church service? From the fact that nothing is done about it, the answer is in the negative. Such also seems to be the attitude of the Christian Endeavor Society. If either institution thought the matter of enough importance, they would make strenuous endeavor to secure it. Inasmuch as neither emphasizes its consequence, the matter goes by default. Questioned, I think that the workers in both institutions would admit the desirability of church attendance by the young, but actions speak louder than—silence.

What, then, is the remedy? First, the church must show that she wants the attendance of the children. She has been too indifferent about their staying away herself. If she should show a real interest in the matter, parents, and Sunday school, and Christian Endeavor would be quick to respond. In some churches this desire for the presence of the young is exhibited in the form of a little sermon preached to the children before the regular sermon. could name some churches where this preliminary sermon is quite effective in securing little hearers. Even without this, pressure can be brought to bear upon the family through the pastor, church committee, etc.

The chief thing to do is to make the family feel the importance of making the children early acquainted with the church. The Sunday school and Christian Endeavor are merely the organized efforts of the church, and are not to be compared with the church itself. They are the gateways into the church, and are not to be taken as substitutes for it. Some parents are delusively regarding them as "the children's church."

The third thing is to get the Sunday school and the Christian Endeavor to be helpers in inducing the children to attend the church. In some schools and societies this is done by asking for a show of hands of those who have been at the morning service. In others, by marking the attendance at the service on the class cards, this attendance appearing on the blackboard at the end of the quarter. In various ways the superintendent of the school can show his gratification at any signs of increasing interest in church attendance.

The fact is, we can have the attendance of the children upon the church—if we want it. If we do not get it, it is because we do not care for it enough. The children are the care of the church. The church should so discharge her responsibility that she should be able to say, "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion."

M. C. Hazard.

Editor Emeritus, Sunday School Publications Congregational Church, Boston, Mass.

Dear Doctor Fout:

I have your favor making inquiry as to how secure the attendance of the Sunday school at the regular services of the church. I am glad to inform you of a plan I worked out about five years ago. We call it "The Combination Plan." I enclose the pamphlet containing the outline in detail for any use you may desire to make of it. We use the graded lessons and are greatly pleased with them. All the main features of the regular school can be carried out in our combination plan. We are lengthening the Bible study period a little for the reason that the members of the school desire it.

Very cordially yours,

D. Hasler Glass.

Pastor First Methodist Episcopal Church, Pontiac, Michigan.

The following is the outline of "The Combination Plan," of which Dr. Glass is the author:

- 1. Organ voluntary.
- 2. Hymn.

- 3. Prayer.
- 4. Gloria or Doxology.
- 5. Scripture Lesson.
- 6. Collection and special music by the choir.
- 7. Notices.
- 8. Sermon.
- 9. Brief prayer.
- 10. Hymn.
- 11. Bible study.
- 12. Secretary's report.
- 13. Hymn.
- 14. Benediction.

"The members of the Sunday school and the members of the congregation assemble at the hour of the preaching service and are seated in the auditorium. The service is divided into three periods of one-half hour each. The first covers the first seven numbers of the order of service. The second is occupied by number eight, the sermon, and the third is devoted to Bible study, numbers ten to fourteen. At the close of the sermon the pastor announces that the classes will immediately assemble for Bible

study after the singing of the hymn, and reminds the congregation that the service is not ended, but that it will be in a half hour. Polite ushers are stationed at the doors to give a personal invitation to strangers, or others who might leave the room, to remain for Bible study. The members of the church are loyal, and most strangers are curious to see the new plan to the end of the service; hence the whole congregation remains for the Sunday school. There is not another opening service; but all proceed to the study of the lesson at once. There is no complaint if this part of the service lasts a little longer than thirty minutes, and yet it is better to run on schedule time—the people will be more likely to want to come back again.

"The following are the advantages of the plan:

"It holds the adults to the Sunday school. More than ninety per cent. of the congregation remain for the Sunday-school lesson study. The importance of this achievement cannot be estimated. It has been almost impossible to arouse a general interest in Bible

study. Many members of our church never read the Bible; few seriously study it. Our people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Every religious fad seeks its victims among church members, for the reason that they are not familiar with the simplest teachings of the Word. Heresy, unbelief, indifference, and fanaticism are in most cases easily traceable to a lack of biblical knowledge. Happy is that pastor whose entire membership is given to the study of the Bible; and happy is that people which has a fair chance to study it under competent teachers.

It secures the presence of more than ninety-five per cent. of the Sunday school at the preaching service—an achievement which the church has sought for many years. If it accomplished nothing more than this, it would furnish sufficient reason for every Protestant church to break up the old forms and adjust itself to the easy solution of its greatest problem.

It solves the problem of holding the boys to the church services and Sunday school.

On the occasion of one of the anniversaries as superintendent of his great Sunday school, Mr. Wanamaker said: "If I had my life to live over, I would do different. I would try harder to get the fathers in the Sunday school. Get the fathers and you have the whole family." This has been demonstrated to be literally true in our consolidated service. The fathers remain in the Sunday school and the boys follow their example. Not only are the boys enthusiastic in their praise of the services, but boys who had left the school are coming back and attending regularly.

"It has increased the interest and attendance of our rural population. One of the most serious problems the church meets is that of reaching the farming population. Country life is not less conducive to religion than city life, but it is less convenient in the country to attend church than it is in the city. By personal inquiry I have discovered that the chief reason why the farmers do not attend church is that they cannot go and take the children with them on ac-

count of the lengthy services. When they do go it is so late when they return home that by the time dinner is over it is time to do the chores, and they have no time for rest or for the cultivation of family life. Under the consolidated plan with its shortened service, there has been a marked increase in the attendance of the rural population.

"It improves the preaching. A discriminating minister will almost intuitively adapt his preaching to the character of his audience. Dr. Tyng once said, "If more ministers would preach to the children in their congregations, more people would understand their minister." The presence of the children is an inspiration to the preacher. He who preaches "in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," will have no difficulty in preaching to a congregation in which the children are present. preacher must be brief. He must keep within the thirty-minute limit. This will be a genuine hardship for many speakers, but a great boon to their congregations.

dread of a long sermon keeps more people from attending church than ministers are aware of. We hear many preachers ridicule the "cant about short sermons," but we never hear their congregations make light of it. The supreme end of preaching is to "catch men," and not to consume bait. The chief reason why ministers do not increase in power and effectiveness as they grow in knowledge and experience, is that they insist upon exhausting their fund of information on pulpit themes every time they discuss them.

Following are some of the practical results from the new plan:

"The morning congregation has increased fifty per cent. and is still growing. The Sunday school has increased nearly three hundred per cent. The enthusiasm has grown correspondingly. The people are most enthusiastic over the plan and many are attracted to the church who have not been in the habit of attending. Only from five to ten per cent. of the congregation

leave after the preaching service. Some of these are strangers who "dropped in," and some are persons who could not have come to church but for the short service.

"One of the most notable features of the plan is the men's Sunday-school class. This class is taught by the pastor, and before the consolidation averaged from four to six, and occasionally as many as eight might remain for the school hour; but now the actual attendance at the men's class is nearly twenty-five per cent. of the entire school. It is a real Sunday-school class, meeting with the school and studying the regular lessons.

The families come to church together, sit together, and together return home. It maintains the family unit in worship. It does away with the objectionable class of music and gives the children a chance to sing the standard hymns of the church. It brings them under the instruction and direct appeal of the pastor—a vital point of contact. Unattended children are as decorous as those attended by their parents. If a little child should forget and disturb,

he is always near an adult who needs but to gently touch his shoulder to bring him to perfect order. The service is as dignified and impressive as the exclusive service is, and very much more attractive."

Dear Doctor Fout:

I am sending you to-day a copy of my book entitled, "A Junior Congregation." My conviction confirmed by experience is that the Junior Congregation is the answer to your question, for which so many pastors have been listening; because a Junior Congregation takes the children directly from the home into the church service. It graduates them from the junior to the senior congregation. Thanking you for your interest and help in this great work, I am,

Sincerely yours,

J. M. Farrar.

Pastor First Reformed Church, Brooklyn, New York.

An interview between Dr. Farrar and the Rev. William Durham, of London, England, concerning the Junior Congregation, ap-

peared in the Homiletic Review, from which we copy the following:

To the question, "How does your plan operate?" Dr. Farrar replied, "An invitation extended through the parents, together with a personal solicitation in the home and Sabbath school, will assemble a congregation for organization. This meeting should be held during the week. An entertainment and refreshments appeal to the juniors as they do to the seniors. A roll of members is carefully made, including addresses, ages, and birthdays. A birthday letter from the pastor is a strand in the cord that is not easily broken. To each member is given a package of contribution envelopes. The purpose of the organization is explained. and the children are made to realize that they are as much a part of the church as they are a part of the home. The organization should be the counterpart of the senior organization. As one object of a Junior Congregation is to train the children in church work, each denomination will nat-

urally organize along the line of its own polity.

"We organize somewhat elaborately, for no trouble can be reckoned too great, considering the supreme importance of our objective aim. In their annual meeting, the children hear reports of their work, the amount of their contributions, and the objects for which the money has been expended. The contributions are divided by vote, one-half to the home church, the other half to missions. Bibles are presented to those who keep a list of texts and outlines of sermons. In this meeting, also, the children elect their own officers for the ensuing year. The great result is that the children form the church habit and can be depended on in later years for church worship and work."

"What, Dr. Farrar, do you feel the keynote of this movement?"

"I feel that the children should constitute an integral portion of the congregation. Thus they meet with the regular assembly, and we have all the service of praise and all

the worship before the sermon. In many instances the children sit with their parents in the family pew. In the parable of the loaves and fishes, Mark says that Christ told his disciples to seat the multitudes as 'flowerbeds.' Buds develop better when sheltered by flowers. Chairs from the Sunday school room are placed in front of the pulpit, and the majority of the children prefer these front seats, close to the pastor. It is the hope that when these small folks become men and women the front seats in the church and prayer-meeting will be occupied. Following the general service of praise and worship and just before the sermon is introduced, I preach a short sermon to the juniors. My plan is to bring the children up to me, rather than to go down to them. For any pastor who has studied children well knows that they do not like to be talked down to in baby-talk, even though they may speak in such fashion themselves. A child appreciates a straight-forward, dignified address. This has a double result. First, the child is honored, and appreciates the fact that he is honored by the preacher. Sec-

ond, (and this is of very great consequence,) the seniors are invariably profoundly interested."

"The result of this method pursued during a series of years is that when the children become members of the senior congregation they are already trained workers, familiar with church methods and laws and are in intelligent sympathy with the objects of their church organization. They have formed the church habit, and can be depended upon for church worship and work. It is pleasant to anticipate the influence of a junior congregation so developed upon the next generation of church workers.

There are not a few who are slow to endorse the combination idea, lest the element of worship and the dignity, stateliness, reverence, and worshipfulness that should attach to the service of God's house be sacrificed. In the judgment of many the ideal plan is for a morning service of worship and an afternoon service for Bible study, in which the people of the church and the classes come together for that purpose—the pastor of the church to have charge of

the gathering and devote as much of his time to it as to any other department of the church.

A recent issue of the "British Weekly," mentions an organization in the Trinity Parish of Aberdeen, known as the "Young Peoples Guild," which endeavors to secure the signatures of young people to this pledge: "I now bear witness that I am a lover of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in order that I may be able worthily to spend my life in love and in remembrance of Him, I also promise that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I shall try to attend the house of God at least once every Sunday, and to join in the public worship of the Heavenly Father, the one God from whom cometh every good and perfect gift." The guild is reported to have brought great blessing to the church, and also a great blessing to the children and young people.

While the point of perfection has not been attained, pastors and church workers generally were never so determined as at present to unitedly lift actual conditions to a

plane more nearly ideal, realizing that all possible completeness of vision and practice is the true educational and religious aim. And out of this confusion of ideas and multiplicity of schemes and experiments will come, in the not far distant future, the perfected plan—a practical solution to the problem of Sunday school and the church service.







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